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THREE LETTERS

FROM SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN

TO

'THE TIMES'

ON

LONDON PAUPERISM

WITH

THE LEADING ARTICLE UPON THEM

AND EXTRACTS FROM

*'HOW TO RELIEVE THE POOR OF EDINBURGH AND OTHER
GREAT CITIES, WITHOUT INCREASING PAUPERISM: A
TRIED, SUCCESSFUL, AND ECONOMICAL PLAN, 1867'*

AND FROM THE

*'REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE POORER CLASSES
OF EDINBURGH, AND OF THEIR DWELLINGS,
NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND FAMILIES, 1868'*

LONDON

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LONDON PAUPERISM.



FIRST LETTER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR,—The paupèrised, demoralised state of London is the scandal of our age. London is the metropolis, not only of the United Kingdom, but also of an empire upon which the sun never sets, including the vassal continent of India, itself an empire. London is the foremost city of Christendom; and at this season the delegates assemble here of societies which have for their object the evangelisation of the world. The population of London is as large as the aggregate population of the three next largest European cities—Paris, Vienna, and Berlin—and it closely approximates to that of Scotland, is nearly equal to the population of Holland, and is not quite three times that of Wales. The wealth of London is even more remarkable than its population; and British dependencies and foreign nations look to it as an inexhaustible treasury from which loans of vast aggregate amount may be obtained for carrying on every sort of public and private undertaking. Yet this London is a whited sepulchre, which, indeed, appears beautiful outward, but within is full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. It is a gigantic laboratory of corruption and crime; and, while it aspires to christianise the heathen, it exercises a far more direct and effectual influence in heathenising Christians, and in dragging the rest of England down to its own low level. This monstrous evil is the compound result of various causes,

with some of the most remediable of which I will endeavour to deal in a distinct and practical manner.

And, first of all, with regard to what is commonly called the vagrant class. We are not now speaking of the sick, aged, and infirm poor, nor of the industrious ablebodied in temporary distress; but of the class of which the idle ablebodied and habitual vagrants form the nucleus. Some persons have a natural predisposition for a roving and rambling life, which is capable of being directed into useful channels; but the ordinary motive is dislike to continuous industry, or a taste for low and degrading pursuits.

Vagrants have their seasons, like their betters; and their plan for the year nearly follows that of fashionable life. They assemble in London in spring, to reap the harvest of the full season; and as the town thins, they follow the company to the various watering places. How completely they use the casual wards of the metropolitan workhouses, as a town house provided for them at the public expense, will be seen from the following return, showing that the flow of vagrants to London increases at the very time when ordinary pauperism diminishes:—

METROPOLITAN PAUPERISM.

	Paupers.	Vagrants.
Second week of March	169,553	1,168
Third " "	166,586	1,447
Fourth " "	163,677	1,395
First " April	158,774	1,269
Second " "	153,517	1,365
Third " "	148,601	1,489
Fourth " "	145,421	1,580
Fifth " "	142,873	1,604
First " May	140,515	1,628
Second " "	139,524	1,760

The explanation of the last extraordinary increase is the Derby week.

Lately, when I expressed my surprise that a single policeman sufficed for the town of Shanklin and its environs, I was told this was so at other times; but that towards autumn

the Isle of Wight was invaded by a swarm of vagrants, who were whining or minatory according to the power of resistance of the persons whom they happened to meet, and were always ready to pilfer, or worse, when they had an opportunity. The relation of the vagrant to the criminal class is of the most intimate kind. Persons without accumulated means must live either by working or by preying upon others; and those who choose this last bad part, are likely to be guided, as to the mode and extent of their depredations, only by the temptation and the opportunity.

In London, this class has attained a magnitude previously unknown in history. First, there is the imported article, and then there is the home manufacture. The amount expended every year in London in public and private charity is variously estimated at from four to seven millions sterling; so that, whatever London may be to the working-man, it is a land flowing with milk and honey to the idler. The old popular myth that London streets are paved with gold is practically realised to this class. Under the influence of such attractions as these, the metropolis has become the common sink of everything that is worst in the United Kingdom. The case has become more serious than ever now, because many of the counties and provincial towns have begun to enforce the laws against mendicants, and the metropolitan colluvies is, therefore, swelled by a double process of repulsion and attraction. Everywhere the criminal class merges, by a natural sympathy, in the vagrant class; but in London it is estimated that one person in every 150 is a housebreaker, a pickpocket, a shoplifter, a receiver of stolen goods, or a human bird of prey, or man-wolf, of some sort, which gives upwards of 20,000 of this class.

According to two independent calculations, there are about 150,000 children whose parents live in chronic indigence, and about 100,000 of them are loose in London streets, including those who appear for a longer or shorter period in the ragged schools. From this great mass of neglected childhood spring the juvenile criminals who eventually stock our gaols with hardened offenders. They are almost uni-

versally stunted in their growth, and often emaciated with want. 'All of them are more or less debased; their intellectual faculties are of the lowest order; their moral sense is stifled or inactive, through suspicion or obstinacy.'

'The enormous facts of London charity' are, to a lamentable extent, responsible for this state of things. I do not refer to giving to beggars in the streets, which has been brought within comparatively trifling limits, but to the wholesale, indiscriminate action of competing societies, crowned by the munificent individual gifts of rich charitable persons. This has erected mendicancy into a lucrative scientific profession, and has stimulated it by the pleasurable excitement which belongs to a lottery. Labour is the great antidote to crime: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.' The effect of modern charity has been to suspend this primeval law, and to destroy, in large classes of our people, the natural motives to self-respect and independence of character, and their kindred virtues of industry, frugality, and temperance. Many have excellent wages during certain periods of the year; but, in the face of our so-called charitable system, the man who saves is worse off than his extravagant neighbour. Not one in a thousand, therefore, provides for the morrow. Everything is spent in selfish indulgence, with the comfortable assurance that, when the bad season comes, there will be no hesitation in admitting the claim of 'the labourer out of work' to 'have his things taken out of pawn,' and to receive 'such temporary assistance as may be necessary to prevent his home from being broken up.' There is no part of London where the trade of the publican is so flourishing as at the East-end, where so-called 'charity' has done its worst. It has even thrown out a new branch of business there, for fortunes are made by setting up one public-house after another and selling the goodwill. The crowning curse of London is drunkenness, for there is no form of sin or sorrow in which it does not play a part; and drunkenness goes hand in hand with misdirected charity. The claims of relationship, which bind the poor together by the sweetest of

all charities, when they are left in a natural state, are altogether ignored in this moral crash. In making out a claim upon a London charitable society, a father or son capable of assisting is an element carefully kept out of sight.

In his recent motion on the 'Police Regulation of Vagrants,' Dr. Brewer said :—

The evil was increased by the number of charitable institutions intended for the relief of distress, but conducted without discipline, without classification, and without labour, whether as a means of education or as a test of condition. . . . Of the working generally of these institutions, those who had most deeply studied this subject for years as it affected this metropolis felt that what John de Thoresby said in his day was true also in this, for, under colour of giving alms, these institutions were simply provocative of the very evils which they were intended to mitigate and allay.

Upon this Mr. Goschen remarked :—

Yet he would frankly state that the co-operation of the Home Office and the Poor Law Board was not sufficient to put down vagrancy, for there was another power which could contribute far more effectually to put it down—namely, the public themselves. Unless the public co-operated, it was impossible to hope to deal satisfactorily with the subject. His hon. friend the member for Colchester (Dr. Brewer) had spoken of the effect on the houseless poor of opening the private refuges in London, and, indeed, those refuges had as much influence on the spread of vagrancy as the casual wards of the workhouses. While no provision was made for the homeless poor of the metropolis, as his hon. friend preferred to call them, there was every reason why benevolent persons should encourage private refuges, as many harrowing stories were told, and told truly, of accidents happening in consequence of persons coming to town and being unable to find a lodging for the night. It should be borne in mind, however, that in the refuges there was no discipline and no test whatever, and it was curious to observe the effect which the opening of these establishments during the winter had upon the casual wards. Anybody who glanced at the statistics of pauperism in the metropolis would perceive that, while about December pauperism increased, there was a sudden decrease in the number of those who frequented the casual wards. The reason was, that they transferred themselves to the more comfortable wards of the refuges, where there was no labour test.

When the charities of this kind were first established, the Poor Law arrangements in the metropolis for the relief of the houseless poor were in an extremely imperfect state. But public attention became strongly directed to the defect, and the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1864 led to the passing of the Houseless Poor Acts of 1864 and 1865, under which decent and sufficient accommodation has been provided for every poor wanderer or casual who may happen to be destitute of food or shelter in the metropolis. According to the Report of the Poor Law Board for 1868-9, the accommodation provided is for 1,539 men and 1,066 women, or 2,605 in all; while the largest number admitted in any one night was 1,698, showing surplus accommodation for 907 persons. Even if the accommodation at any particular workhouse were insufficient, the guardians would be bound to provide a lodging, with necessary food, for the night, for all applicants, either in their own house or elsewhere. So far from the existing arrangements of the casual wards erring on the side of harshness, complaints are made against them on the opposite ground; and it is admitted by the Poor Law Board that more uniformity of treatment and regulation, stricter supervision, and more ready means of communication between the authorities superintending the various vagrant wards, appear to be urgently required.

This altered state of things has placed the night refuges in an entirely new position. As satisfactory legal provision has been made for the objects for which these institutions were established, they are no longer necessary; and they now compete with the Poor Law by the offer of superior advantages. Previously to admission to the casual wards, a strict search is made to ascertain whether the vagrant who claims a night's lodging is or is not destitute of resources. His body is cleansed by bathing; and, if necessary, his clothes are disinfected; and a task of work is exacted from the able-bodied. In the night refuges these checks and safeguards are wanting. A perfectly free lodging is offered to all, without the discipline which labour involves; and persons

belonging to that class which requires, more than any other, to be dealt with in a strict and careful manner, are enabled to spend all they have in vicious indulgence, with the certainty that a night's lodging and a supper and breakfast will be given them without any payment, either in money or labour.

Two of these night refuges take in together 1,200 persons ; and, when they are both open, the aggregate number in the whole of the metropolitan casual wards is reduced below this. Of one of them the vicar of the parish says :—

There is no real enquiry of any kind before the inmates are admitted ; no ameliorating care is bestowed on them when they are admitted. The refuge is just as much a charity as it would be to throw a lot of low lodging-houses open free, and to keep order when they were filled. The refuge is a nightly receptacle for prowling 'ne'er-do-weels,' employed daily evilly, who are in any case a moral and often a physical pest to us. It acts as a help, not to a better life, but to the prolonging of mendicancy and immorality. The limit of residence is constantly exceeded by excuse or evasion.

The other is a large group of common lodging-houses for the lowest description of people, subsidised and disguised as a charity. The numerous distinguished patronesses, patrons, and vice-presidents cannot, of course, be aware of the sort of institution to which they have lent the authority of their names. Without this help it is impossible that the class which preys upon the rest of society could exist in anything like its present proportions, for it would, in the absence of this support, be at once brought face to face with the Poor Law. Where the self-respect of a man is at the lowest ebb, the only moral and physical training that can be given him is to teach him self-reliance by making him work, and it is a great misfortune that there should be a class of institutions which stand between our street Arabs and the casual wards of the workhouses, where they would receive this sort of education. As it is, we place the lowest class of people under the peculiar temptation which has generally been considered to be the special snare of the highest—of having a living secured to them irrespective of their own exertions

—without its being possible to supply the antidote which intellectual and social pleasures and political pursuits afford to persons belonging to the educated classes who have their time at their own disposal. The case is even worse than this, for persons of the higher classes can only spend upon vice what they can save from providing for their necessary subsistence and for maintaining their place in society; whereas the class which lives, not by labour, but by preying upon others, being provided with supper, bed, and breakfast in the night refuges, free of cost and trouble, are able to spend the whole of their time in devising and carrying out schemes for plundering society, and the whole of their ill-gotten gains in public-houses and brothels. We are involved in a vicious circle. Destitution called for relief, and the relief was given in such a wholesale and indiscriminate way as to increase the destitution, which increased destitution has again been met by more indiscriminate relief, and, so on, all round the circle.

While no new night refuges have been established since the passing of the Houseless Poor Acts, numerous institutions have been founded for rescuing persons of both sexes and all ages, and especially the young, from the vagrant, predatory, profligate class, and preparing them to perform a useful and respectable part in life. The Dudley Stuart House of Refuge has been entirely converted to this object, and the Newport Market and Field-lane Refuges show a decided tendency in the same direction. Now that satisfactory public provision has been made for shelter and food for houseless persons, the time has arrived for giving to all the night refuges a preventive or remedial character, on the principle of the industrial schools and reformatories, the homes which have for their benevolent object the saving women from vice or reclaiming them from it, and the Houses of Charity, where persons shipwrecked in the voyage of life may find a temporary refuge, until they can be helped with clothes, or tools, or influential recommendations, to the inestimable blessing of a fresh start in a useful and respectable social position.

We have arrived at such a pass in this great metropolis of ours that society can be saved only by leaving the relief of destitution to the Poor Law, and by throwing the strength of voluntary effort into the great work of training the young to industrious habits, and lending a helping hand to those of mature age who are still capable of performing a useful part in life. We must bear our own burdens, and alleviate them for the future as we best may. As we can no longer send our convicts to the colonies, we should try to prevent the growth of the material from which convicts are made. As persons belonging to the London proletaire class are not fit to become emigrants, we ought to keep down the undercrop from which this harvest is reaped.

I have the honour to be,

C. E. TREVELYAN.

LONDON, *May 27.*

SECOND LETTER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR,—The Poor Law falls short of its professed object, but what chance would there have been of its attaining even its present moderate degree of efficiency if, instead of each Board of Guardians having a manageable district exclusively appropriated to it, numerous Boards, with their respective staffs of relieving officers, had exercised concurrent jurisdiction over entire counties, or over this great metropolis? Yet this can give no idea of the cross machinery of relief working in all directions in London. To use the words of the present Bishop of London:—

You have relieving officers distributing an enormous amount of relief contributed by the ratepayers. Then you have district visiting societies, and almost every other sort of society distinct from each other; and, in addition, in every district you have a number of benevolent individuals who, without making use of these agencies, distribute money, clothes, and other things in various neighbourhoods.

If the different Boards of Guardians all operated over the whole metropolis, they would at least act under the same rules; but these multifarious agencies are constituted according to every possible principle, while relief is only the professed object of many of them, the real motive being to give spiritual instruction under cover of material assistance.

The first effect of this has been to paralyse the action of the Poor Law. The legal obligation of appointing a sufficient number of qualified relieving officers, and of giving adequate relief according to the exigencies of each particular case, is disregarded, because, no sooner is a case of benevolence heard of, than hundreds of volunteers race to relieve it. This is the real explanation of the loose habit of investigation, and of the starvation rates of out-door allowance, which

disgrace our metropolitan Poor Law administration. If a clear division of labour was established between the Poor Law Guardians and the charitable societies, the Guardians would, in self-defence, take the necessary steps to meet their responsibility, and the ratepayers would see the necessity of selecting the best men in their respective Unions to be Guardians. The conference of delegates of Boards of Guardians in the East of London last year expressed their Conviction that, even from a purely economical point of view, nothing can be more shortsighted than to deal out a measure of scanty and insufficient relief. Not only does this involve a dereliction of duty, but it at once invites the intrusion of benevolent strangers as self-constituted almoners, who, from their want of acquaintance with the circumstances and necessities of the poor, are always liable to be imposed upon, and who too often, by an indiscriminate distribution of the funds entrusted to them, without any communication with the Guardians or their officers, paralyse the efforts of the latter, and tend to increase indefinitely the pauperism of the district, which, with the best intentions, they may be anxiously endeavouring to relieve. The guiding principles for ensuring justice alike to the ratepayer and the poor will be invariably found to consist in the determination that relief, when allowed, shall be always sufficient to provide adequately for the necessities of the pauper and those dependent on him, and, concurrently with this, in the provision of ample and efficient supervision to check imposition and to ensure the due and timely administration of the requisite relief.

Even from the narrow point of view of keeping down the rates, the relief of destitution ought to be left entirely to the Poor Law, because in no other way can the increase of destitution be kept in check.

Then this extraordinary variety of administrations, employed in doing precisely the same work, causes enormous waste. Each society must have its separate offices, printing, advertising; and a swarm of collectors is constantly going the round of the metropolis, whose real cost is nowhere shown, because they are paid by deductions from the sums collected by them.

The Bishop of London proceeds :—

But then the great evil is, that the money thus expended does not do its work, for the money distributed by these many societies goes to

those who should not have it, and those who should have it, the meritorious and suffering poor, do not get any.

It has been calculated that if one-eighth of the whole metropolitan population—that is, 400,000 persons—were entirely dependent upon the other seven-eighths, the sum annually expended in London in legal and voluntary charity would supply £17 a head for every man, woman, and child, or to every family of five persons £85 a year, and leave £50,000 to pay the expenses of collection and distribution. Notwithstanding this excess of expenditure, and the vast extent of the paid and volunteer agency employed in raising and disbursing the money, pauperism is advancing much beyond the relative increase of population. In 1858 the ratio of pauperism to population was 2·90 per cent.; in 1868 it was 5·09 per cent.; and it frequently happens that old and infirm persons, who cannot, from weakness or want of effrontery, press their claims on charitable societies, die of starvation. The right which every person in this kingdom has to be provided with the absolute necessities of life is withheld, in the hope that the insufficient Poor Law allowance will be supplemented by some of the numerous charitable societies; but, owing to the want of organisation, this sometimes falls through, and starvation ensues. This might naturally be expected to induce people to abate the waste, and establish a comprehensive, consistent system. But no. The starvation cases are immediately seized upon to season our sensational charitable literature, and the waste and confusion of administration are aggravated by the fresh impulse given to this gushing, fitful, irregular action.

But the evil does not end here (I am still using the Bishop of London's words), for the money thus bestowed, instead of relieving human misery, increases vice and beggary, for the impostors find it very easy to have different places of abode, and receive three, or four, or five families' allowances from the various agencies. It is easy to conceive that they thus have the means of obtaining larger incomes than they could receive if they were to devote themselves assiduously to the paths of honest industry. And can you conceive this going on, within sight of the labouring people among whom the impostors dwell, without de-

teriorating the honesty of that population? When men, honest working-men, see another man, living in the same ranks of life as themselves, obtaining more comforts by idleness than they can obtain by industry, and learn, perhaps, that this is done by receiving visits from societies, they, too, are ready to follow the example, and independence is broken down. It is a sorrowful thing when a working-man, among working-men, finds that the wages of mendicity are better than the wages of honest industry, for he is tempted to continue the downward course—in which he tempts others—and in nine cases out of ten, from that downward course there is no return.

It would be waste of time to enlarge on this theme, for it is well known that our wholesale, indiscriminate charity has created a host of professional mendicants, from the pretended broken-down lady or gentleman to the female street beggar with borrowed children, who are more than a match for our volunteer sisters and brothers of charity. The able superintendent of the Dudley Stuart House of Refuge says:—

The experience of the past two years has clearly proved that no acuteness of cross-examination or requirement of recommendations, without positive and independent proof by personal investigation and enquiry, can ensure even the experienced almoner against the clever deceptions of the often more experienced impostor, who has studied charity as a means of livelihood.

But worst of all is the effect of this golden harvest, reaped by the indolent and impudent, upon the previously sound portion of the population. The demoralisation spreads in a continually widening circle. Even the working classes have become tainted. Not only the habit, but the very idea of thrift seems to have been abandoned. The ordinary practice is to spend all that can be saved from weekly earnings in various kinds of selfish indulgence, in which the public-house always comes in for the largest share; and, when a bad time comes, to pawn household furniture, clothes, and tools, with the full assurance that, on application to a charitable society, the ‘honest workman out of employ’ will receive the earliest help. And it is so much sweeter to obtain an abundant subsistence without work, than a stinted, precarious one with it, that the great professional

mendicant class is constantly receiving recruits from the other classes.

But it is time that we should consider the remedy for this state of things. A 'condition precedent,' which governs the whole subject, is that charitable societies should not supplement Poor Law relief, but that each agency should take entire charge of its own class of cases. Until this is done, Poor Law administrators will never feel that they exercise their functions at their peril. Besides the starvation cases, there are the cases of widows with children. At present they receive just enough to demoralise them, and their children largely recruit the standing army of habitual paupers and criminals. But if the rule were firmly established that every case must be either entirely a Poor Law or entirely a charitable case, then a certain number of the most deserving and promising cases would be taken in hand by charitable societies or individuals, and the rest would be fully provided for by the Guardians, the children being educated and put out in life through the district schools, or some other medium. There ought to be the freest possible interchange between the charitable and Poor Law agencies. Each should make known to the other cases which appear to require a different treatment from that which they are themselves able to apply; and charity will constantly remove from the Poor Law category cases which call for special arrangements—the young, for instance, and persons of all ages and both sexes, who can be reclaimed to the performance of a useful part in life. But the rule should be absolute, that whichever agency finally undertakes a case should undertake it entirely, and do whatever is necessary to meet the real requirements of it.*

The general outline of the division of labour between charitable and legal relief is, that to *relieve* destitution belongs to the Poor Law, while to *prevent* destitution is the peculiar function of charity. If charity undertook those who have already become paupers, the ratepayers would be relieved at the expense of the benevolent, and the resources

* See the note at the end of this Letter, p. 18.

of private charity would be exhausted on an object for which it has no special qualification. Aged and infirm paupers, the drunken, idle, and recklessly improvident, the entire vagrant class, should be left to the Poor Law. To use the words of the Edinburgh Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor :—

In general the proper objects for charitable relief are the sober and industrious, who by accident, sickness, family distress, or other unavoidable and unforeseen cause, are in danger of being plunged into permanent pauperism, but who, by timely and suitable help, may be enabled to tide over the emergency, and regain their former footing of self-support.

But the main function of charity is, by securing a proper training for the young, to break the continuity of that permanent caste of the poor and vicious which is the curse of our civilisation. The secret of reducing pauperism and crime to a minimum and keeping it there is discoverable in this direction :—

The training of a child costs less than the maintenance of a criminal; and, to put it on the lowest possible ground, every pair of hands removed from the unproductive and placed in the productive class is a pecuniary saving to the community.

The establishment and maintenance of suitable schools is only one and not perhaps the most important point. To aid the cumbrous and expensive operation of the Industrial Schools Act, by bringing before the magistrate children detained from school for purposes of begging, and children habitually neglected by their parents or guardians, is a far more urgent duty. To depauperise the children of the State and incorporate them in the body of our working population, by bringing them under the healing, transforming influences of *home*, through the boarding-out system, which has been shown by the experience of Scotland, Massachusetts, and some English Unions, to have power to discharge even the workhouse taint, is another blessed work of charity of the same kind.

I have the honour to be, Sir, yours, &c.,

C. E. TREVELYAN.

London, June 1.

NOTE TO PAGE 16.

‘All sources of income ought to be taken into consideration before the amount of the relief is fixed. The Guardians are bound to consider what legal and reasonable expectation exists of assistance from other sources, either fully adequate or partially adequate to meet those wants of the applicant for which the Guardians would otherwise be legally bound to provide.’—*Mr. Goschen's answer to the Metropolitan Guardians, June 3, 1870.*

This uncertainty and undefined responsibility makes liars of the poor, cowards of the benevolent, and screws of the guardians. This stumbling-block must be got out of the way by firmly establishing the principle that every case must belong either entirely to the Poor Law, or entirely to charity, before there can be any effectual co-operation between Poor Law and charity on the basis of a systematic visitation of the poor in their own homes (where alone can be procured that information as to their habits, character, and resources, which is the indispensable foundation of a wise administration of relief), and of a free transfer of cases from one agency to the other, as they can be most appropriately dealt with by one or the other.

Happily the latest and most authoritative expression of the Poor Law Board is also the most satisfactory. It will be seen from the following notice of the subject in their report, which has just been published for 1869–70, that the principle of co-operation between charity and Poor Law, *on the principle of entire responsibility for their respective classes of cases*, is fully admitted. At present the ‘dispensers of charitable funds’ are not on an equal footing with ‘the Poor Law authorities,’ for the charitable funds, with which the former are entrusted, were not subscribed to relieve the rate-payers from their legal responsibilities.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

On the 20th of November last we issued a minute on ‘Relief to the Poor in the Metropolis,’ in which, amongst other matters, we called attention to the relations between the guardians, as dispensers of legal relief, on the one hand, and the almoners who dispose of funds entrusted to them by charitable persons, on the other. We print the minute in the appendix. We print also in the appendix the replies which

we received from various boards of guardians,] to a circular which we addressed to them, requesting their views on the points we had raised in the minute. Many boards of guardians fell in readily with our main suggestions, and co-operation with some of the leading charitable organisations has been successfully established in several Unions. More difficulty has been experienced in inducing the dispensers of charitable funds to supply lists of the recipients of their bounty to the Poor Law authorities, than in persuading the guardians to place their lists at the disposal of the public. Irrespective of the actual results which have been achieved, much valuable information has been elicited by the discussions which have taken place on the subject, and the statements put forward of the difficulties which prevent, in many cases, the adoption of the suggestions contained in the minute have not been the least useful part of the controversy. Two important facts have been prominently elicited, both unsatisfactory in themselves, but the full knowledge of which was essential to improved administration. It has appeared, in the first place, that relief is freely given in aid of wages in several parts of London; and, in the second place, that in innumerable instances the charities and the relieving officers are assisting the same persons. The deplorably low scale of relief observed in many Unions induces charitable persons to supplement relief, which, in their opinion, is totally inadequate to support a family decently, and these grants of alms react on the minds of the guardians, who, by degrees, rely on such charity as a source of income to the pauper which they may fairly take into account. The great increase in the number of the out-door poor, temporarily caused by the severity of the winter, rendered the moment one of peculiar difficulty to the guardians, and not very opportune for increasing the rate of relief, so that it was difficult to persuade them to take steps which appear indispensable to a thorough understanding with the charities, namely, so to act as to give confidence to the public that cases once undertaken by the relieving officers might be safely left in their hands exclusively. We have, however, not ceased to press upon the guardians the absolute necessity of increased vigilance and the appointment of more relieving officers on the one hand, and on the other hand the grant of more adequate relief. Liberal relief, without watchfulness and domiciliary visits to the paupers, might certainly add greatly to the expenditure; but liberal relief, coupled with a more stringent system of supervision, by means of a better and stronger staff of officers, would not necessarily exceed the amount which has been spent in giving very small sums to a vast number of paupers, without sufficient organisation for ascertaining and testing the real wants of the applicants.

THIRD LETTER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR,—Wherever pauperism has been successfully dealt with, as at Edinburgh, Elberfield, and Boston, the simple practical machinery recommended by Dr. Chalmers in his ‘Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns’ has been adopted. He argued strongly against pauperism being under one general management, which, he said, was certain to end in the administrators taking refuge either in an indiscriminate facility which will refuse nothing, or in an indiscriminate resistance, which will suffer nothing but clamours and importunities to overbear it; and he advocated what he called the ‘independent local system,’ under which each parish was held responsible for its own administration, and was again subdivided into sections called ‘proportions,’ over which an elder was appointed to test the first applications for relief, and to be the medium for submitting them to the parochial committee. The great Irish famine was stayed by an organisation framed on the same principle. After vainly attempting a system of relief works, which brought society to the brink of dissolution, a relief committee, composed of the magistrates, one clergyman of each persuasion, the Poor Law Guardians, and the three highest ratepayers, was appointed in each electoral division; and a finance committee, consisting of four gentlemen carefully selected for their weight of character and knowledge of business, was formed to control the expenditure in each Union. Nothing could be better than the way they all worked together for a common object of absorbing interest, and the famine was stayed.¹ At Edinburgh the subdivision is carried so far that the territorial unit has only about twelve families requiring regular visitation, with a

¹ See the ‘Edinburgh Review’ for January 1848, and ‘The Irish Crisis,’ Longman & Co., 1848.

visitor assigned to each. There are 900 visitors actually at work under 28 local committees, in addition to from 250 to 300 committeemen who occasionally act as visitors, including many of the most highly cultivated and influential members of Edinburgh society; and especial thanks are said to be due to the working men and women who have undertaken this duty during their brief intervals of respite from toil. 'They have a power and an influence with those whom the association seeks to improve far beyond that of visitors taken from any other class of society.'

The point at which we have arrived here in London, is that the outline of an organisation on this principle has been formed in fifteen out of the thirty-eight Metropolitan Poor Law Unions; but five or six general relief societies still range at large over the metropolis, besides numberless charitable societies with more limited objects, and charitable individuals without limit either of number or object. We have the skeleton, indeed; but it still has to be clothed with muscles and flesh, and to be animated with warm life blood. The task of grappling with the chronic pauperism and teeming crime of our metropolis, with its 3,250,000 people, is, under any circumstances, sufficiently appalling; but it is an indispensable condition of success, that there should be only a single responsible committee for each district, in which the clergy of all persuasions and the most active and influential laymen should be represented, and that each district should be again subdivided among responsible visitors in sufficient detail to allow of the state of the poor being really investigated and dealt with according to the specialities of each case. Until we arrive at this point we shall not be face to face with our task. Sympathy and counsel, advising where to put the boys to school, and helping to get the girls into service, encouraging the able-bodied members of the family to save a portion of their wages against a time of need, or to support their aged or infirm parents, checking dirt and overcrowding, and, if necessary, calling the attention of the proper authorities to physical and moral nuisances, recommending really deserving cases to the district committee for

temporary relief, and firmly discountenancing the immoral, the improvident, the would-be mendicant, are impossible without a local apportionment of the zealous agency and abundant means which, wandering at haphazard over the whole circumference of the metropolis, cause some to be surfeited with plenty while others are consumed with famine, and stimulate all to a scramble of the worst kind, because the prizes are won by those who are most accomplished in the arts of deception.

But how is this indispensable fusion to be accomplished? The clergy of all persuasions hold the key of the position. Besides actually managing many endowed charities, and having the control of the collections made in their churches and chapels for charitable purposes, their just influence on this subject is such that if we have them on our side our object will be quickly and easily attained. This is a subject on which the authority of Holy Writ and the conclusions of modern science are entirely in accord.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, 'It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.'

There could not possibly be a better-founded division of labour than that between things material and things spiritual, or, as the translators of the Bible express it in the abstract at the beginning of the chapter, between 'bodily sustenance' and the 'food of the soul.' The complaints made on behalf of the widows show that even Apostles might fail to give satisfaction in the administration of relief, and the argument used by the Apostles for seeking to be exonerated from the charge ('it is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables') indicates that their spiritual efficiency might have been impaired by

having to attend to the details of charitable relief. The result was the appointment of a relief committee, of which we propose an humble imitation, after more than 1,800 years, in this metropolis of the West.

This experience completely holds to the present day, not only to the wasting of the time and secularising the spirit of the clergy, but even to the suggestion of grave scandals, which are injurious to the fair fame of Christianity itself. The Rev. Mr. Rowsell, Rector of St. Margaret's, Lothbury, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, bore this testimony on March 30, before a large and distinguished assembly, on the occasion of the first annual meeting of the Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity:—

He believed there was no more degrading form of administering alms than that resorted to by competing religious bodies. There was nothing more disgraceful, nothing which tended so much to falsify the character of the people, as the almost conscious bribery by which the poor were sometimes induced to say canting words, or, when the almoner went round, to quote the Bible and appear very devout in order to elicit alms. He held it to be vitally necessary for clergymen to separate their spiritual from their temporal ministrations. When he went on his spiritual errands he made it a rule to put aside all thoughts of temporal relief, knowing from experience that the danger might be that the one to whom he went for one purpose might only welcome his visit for quite another. He remembered a poor Irishman whom he urgently asked to send for his priest. He seemed disinclined to do so, and at last said, 'O, sir, if I send for him, you will just continue the mate you have been giving me, won't you?' He thought, of all the evils that this society was laying the axe to the root of, the most serious was that dangerous practice of proselytisation. It was the more dangerous because, it seemed to him, there was mixed up with it so much conscientious feeling. They bribed persons, as it were, by giving them alms to get them on their side; and, if they succeeded, they had not only a weak member, but a false man; and this demoralisation was just in proportion to the amount of alms he received from their hands.

Mr. Walrond, Vicar of St. Mary, Charterhouse, stated as follows on January 15:—

Ministers of religion are harassed away from attention to their spiritual duties, and are sometimes ensnared into thinking that to be bene-

volent administrators is to fulfil the functions of their office. Their time is taken up in getting and giving. Circumstances of spiritual, are wont to pass unseen by the side of circumstances of great temporal need. There is a temptation to think that, having given to the latter, we have relieved the former; that, in fact, with a shilling and a word or two of religious commonplace we have done our duty to the poor. The very fact of a religious minister or his agent bringing the relief is, on the other hand, a snare to the recipient, who is tempted to put the best religious face he can on his condition to please the giver, and to listen with an air of receptiveness and goodwill to the 'word in season,' which really may be unintelligible or repugnant to him. Under the fallacy that charity (so called), however dispensed, must be at least harmless, specially so if connected with some professions of religion, there have arisen a set of religious philanthropic adventurers who, without any responsibility or subsequent audit, collect funds from the public for some special case or neighbourhood, and spend them ignorantly, sometimes dishonestly, to the discredit of wiser and more scrupulous well-doers.

By the system of relief through denominations a spirit of sectarian antagonism is sown and nurtured among the poor. An applicant, for instance, refused by the Rev. A. because he is a member of the Rev. B.'s (a Dissenter's) congregation, goes away, saying, 'Ah! a pretty sort of religion the Church of England; he won't believe me because I am a Dissenter;' while, indeed, this is not at all the case, but because the Rev. A. (from want of communication with him) does not know what relief the Rev. B. may have given, and whether, to the exclusion of some other recipient, a double benefit would not be conferred by his gift. In this way evil feelings arise.

Sometimes unwittingly, though not always so, the clergy and religious teachers bribe by the gifts given away in connexion with their several churches and chapels, and the poor are induced (to what avoidance of home duties and destruction of growth in religious life!) to go here on Sunday, there on Monday, there on Tuesday, and so on through the week; not really for instruction, but because they may claim acquaintance with so many different givers of charity.

There is a waste of charitable funds; and the same persons, on account of their importunity and hypocrisy, receive twice or thrice, or more often, while others worthier are left unaided for want of means.

And, lastly, in our action in the matter, and by allowing ourselves to be ever-ready go-betweens, we have weakened the consciences of laymen as to the duty of personal interest in, and knowledge of the poor, and thus have robbed them of a happy privilege, and charity of its real meaning.

And the mixed Clerical and Lay Committee appointed at the conference held at Sion College in December last, 'to consider the desirableness of united action with a view to checking the increase of pauperism and improving the condition of the deserving poor,' reported as follows, in guarded, but significant terms:—

It seems well worthy of consideration whether, whenever circumstances appear to justify an appeal to the liberality of the wealthier parts of the metropolis for the relief of the distress which exists where the poor are crowded together, the appeal might not with advantage be made simultaneously in all churches and chapels, and by a house to house canvass, and the amount collected be paid into a common fund, and divided, without regard to religious distinctions, among the various charitable agencies in the district where the distress exists. Thus the stream of charity would be more equably diffused, and the suspicions as to motives which at times cleave to individual activity in this field be diminished, if not removed.

I purposely confine the evidence on this part of the subject to clerical testimony.

While Mr. Walrond says, on behalf of the clergy, 'By allowing ourselves to be ever ready go-betweens, we have weakened the consciences of laymen as to the duty of personal interest in and knowledge of the poor, and thus have robbed them of a happy privilege, and charity of its real meaning,' Mr. Bosanquet, secretary to the new society, in a little book published by him last year, on 'London: its Growth, Charitable Agencies, and Wants,' said:—

We have put too much on the clergy. It was evidently not the intention of the Founder of our religion that the visiting of the sick and poor, and helping them in times of difficulty, should be thrown mainly on the order of teachers whom He appointed. . . . My own opinion is, that the less clergymen have to do with temporal relief the better.

The most important testimony, however, and the most in point, is that of our beloved and honoured Bishop, which was delivered on April 27, at a meeting for the extension of the Organisation Society to the great parish of St. Pancras:—

Whenever we feel an uncertainty as to the necessity of giving, we should not give at all, but we should use such an organisation as this

association offers. I am much gratified at seeing the rapid progress of the parent society. It is only twelve months ago since the first meeting was held, and now fifteen committees in connection with it have been established in different parts of London. I have no doubt that experience has shown many difficulties to be overcome in the course of the operations, and some failures may be expected, but the movement is a great blessing to the cause of real charity and to the progress of the community, and will, if properly carried out, and assisted by the clergy of all denominations, be the means of amending many evils which have grown up in the metropolis.

The first result of the acceptance of this principle by the clergy, would be that the Metropolitan Association—which was established after a meeting held at London House, in December 1834, to distribute, through the clergy and district visitors, without distinction of religious belief, the contributions of charitable persons in such parts of London as most needed them—would be incorporated with the Organisation Society, and the district visitors would become members of the district committees of that society, and would furnish a substantial basis for making the detailed apportionment of the poorer metropolitan populations which is an indispensable condition of reducing the heavy arrear of metropolitan pauperism.

The Society for the Suppression of Mendicity, under the presidency of the Marquis of Westminster, has already held conferences with the Organisation Society, with a view to immediate co-operation and ultimate amalgamation; and, if the Benevolent, or Strangers' Friend Society, founded in 1785 by Dr. Gardner, a friend and follower of John Wesley; the Association for Promoting the Relief of Destitution in the Metropolis, established in 1846; and the Society for the Relief of Distress, established in 1860, all of which have precisely the same object, would also coalesce, we should have the materials for an organisation sufficiently solid and consistent to enable us to face the trial time of next winter without either demoralising the poor or allowing them to suffer severe distress. Although the clergy of every persuasion would be relieved from the responsibility of giving temporal relief, they must always occupy a very influential

position in matters relating to charitable assistance of every kind. They would hold the purse strings to a great extent, because the dole and other endowments administered under their influence, and the Church collections, would be among the most important sources of income of the district committees. They should be *ex officio* members of those committees, but their ordinary relation to them would be that of recommending to their attention cases which come before them in the discharge of their pastoral duties. It would not differ much from the relation in which the clergy of the Established Church now stand to the district visitors, and the Nonconformist clergy to the district treasurers of the Benevolent, or Strangers' Friend Society.

I have the honour to be,

C. E. TREVELYAN.

London, June 2, 1870.

‘TIMES’ ARTICLE ON THE FOREGOING LETTERS.

(June 6, 1870.)

SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN'S letters, of which we publish the third and last this morning, afford a very comprehensive view of the present circumstances of Metropolitan pauperism, and of the problem it involves. Both the class of vagrants and that of ordinary paupers are increasing upon us, and our present manner of affording relief tends to promote the increase. Other causes may possibly be at work, but it is clear that our charitable agencies alone must of necessity aggravate the evil. Sir Charles Trevelyan's facts are sufficiently grave, but we fear they cannot be gainsaid. We have among us a predatory army of vagrants who are constantly passing into the still more hostile force of criminals. If such a class could be isolated, it might be reduced; but it is inevitably reinforced by the whole class of idle persons who have neither money nor industry of their own, and must lay hands somehow—by begging or by worse means—on the money and the industry of others. If vagrants breed criminals, ordinary paupers breed vagrants; and the general increase in pauperism is but too well known. In 1858, according to Sir Charles Trevelyan, the ratio of paupers to population was 2·9 per cent. In 1868 it was 5·1 per cent. Rates are growing an insupportable burden, and the public are besieged with appeals for charitable help. All we give seems to go into a bottomless tub; the demand increases, and the evil to be remedied appears only aggravated.

By the side of all this distress and vagrancy we have an actual amount of public charity, legal and voluntary, which is sufficient to maintain every pauper in more than the usual comfort of the working class. ‘If one-eighth of the whole

metropolitan population—that is, 400,000 persons—were entirely dependent upon the other seven-eighths, the sum annually expended in London in legal and voluntary charity would supply 17*l.* a head for every man, woman, and child, or to every family of five persons 85*l.* a year, and leave 50,000*l.* to pay the expenses of collection and distribution.’ There is but one conclusion to be drawn from such a comparison of facts. What we behold is a vast lottery, at which the pauper class of this metropolis gain the precarious livelihood of gamblers. They are secured against starvation, and need not be even driven to the workhouse or the casual ward. In the worst time of the year ‘refuges’ afford them a night’s shelter and two meals a day, without any disagreeable equivalents of discipline or work. But comparatively few of them need come even to this pass. What would be the result to the rates, asks Sir Charles Trevelyan, if the various boards of guardians had concurrent jurisdiction over the whole metropolis, if they all distributed relief on different principles, and were ready to listen to any application for help from any quarter? That is the position of the charitable societies of the metropolis. In each parish the clergy, the dissenting ministers, the church societies, the nonconformist societies, and the lay societies are all working over the same ground, and the guardians are responsible for the whole. The cleverest beggars and the most apparently destitute, who are often the most reckless, get the most relief. Honest workmen want, and grow indignant, but are often in time corrupted. Their need, where it is real, is not easy to bear; and when they see that money is to be had for the asking, the temptation is great to ask for it. The general result is a spreading decay of the spirit of independence among our metropolitan poor, and a demoralisation which threatens grave social consequences.

Sir Charles Trevelyan has of late been working with others in a systematic effort to check these evils. As a preliminary, he invites the refuges to transform themselves into reformatory institutions. Their design was necessary and unexceptionable, so long as no other temporary shelter

was provided for the destitute. But now that the guardians are compelled by law to provide a night's lodging and food for every casual pauper who may apply in a state of destitution, charitable institutions which aim at the same object are, at the best, a mere relief to rate-payers. Practically, by offering more comfortable relief than the casual wards, they materially encourage vagrancy. If, however, they devoted their resources to receiving and helping those who were honestly desirous of work, and if they gave assistance in such a manner as to impose an effectual test of this desire, they might become a valuable agency for reclaiming many who have slipped in the path of life without being actually vicious. Sir Charles Trevelyan's proposal to other charitable agencies is very similar. The first, and indeed almost the sole, essential is to avoid working over the same ground. To begin with, let the work of the societies and the Poor Law be completely separated. At present the guardians avowedly give insufficient relief, in reliance on its being supplemented by charity, and charities multiply doles to those who are in receipt of legal relief because they have no guarantee of its sufficiency. Let the Poor Law have its own cases, and let charities have their own, and for this purpose let the two agencies afford each other all possible information respecting the applications made to them. The principle on which the distinction should be made is obviously similar to that which has been suggested in the case of the refuges and casual wards. Let charities concern themselves either with preventing pauperism or with reclaiming it; and let the Poor Law take those cases in which physical sustenance is the only temporal boon which can be bestowed. All this is theoretically plain; but there remain the charities themselves. They are asked to combine under the guidance of a general 'Organisation Society.' It is not proposed to supersede the societies but to distinguish and organise their fields of work in every district. A general committee would be formed in each neighbourhood, to which all applications for help would in the first instance be referred. This committee would contain a due representation of the various societies

at work, and would refer each case to the particular society best suited to deal with it. The design is commendable, and appears to have met with some success. ‘The outline of an organisation on this principle has been formed in fifteen out of the thirty-eight metropolitan unions.’ But the task has only been commenced. ‘Five or six general relief societies still range at large over the metropolis, besides numberless charitable societies with more limited objects, and charitable individuals without limit either of number or object.’ Sir Charles Trevelyan concludes by expressing a hope that he may be supported by the Metropolitan Association, established at London House in 1843; the Strangers’ Friend Society, founded by a follower of Wesley in 1785; the Association for Promoting the Relief of Destitution, established in 1846; and the Society for the Relief of Distress, established in 1860. He invites all these associations to unite in a process which he variously describes as ‘incorporation,’ ‘co-operation,’ ‘coalition,’ and ‘ultimate amalgamation.’

We wish Sir Charles Trevelyan and his associates every success, and nearly everyone will acknowledge that their object is to be desired. But it is vain to overlook the difficulties in their way, and they are probably as much alive to them as we can be. Before this organisation can be effectual, not only must the great societies of the Church, of Nonconformists, and of laymen agree to work together, but every clergyman and minister, and every congregation, must be content to work in subordination to a general committee of direction, and, in a word, must submit their charity to some degree of control. It is evident where the impediment will be found. The object which all desire will be endangered by the same obstacle which frustrates so many well-meant efforts, and fritters away so much national energy—the religious difficulty. The due relief of distress, like education, is a plain temporal necessity, and there are not wanting ‘secularists’ who would deal with the former, as with the latter, subject on purely material and mechanical principles. But in each province religion has claimed a special right of

interference since the earliest days of Christianity, and the sternest political economist must accept the fact. It was not difficult to combine the two agencies so long as religion was under control and worked in only one recognised channel. But, now that every religious sect has a right to put its own principles into unrestricted practice, each will, of course, make experiments in charity as in other matters. Each distrusts, more or less, the methods of the rest, and all distrust the political economists. These are the agencies which Sir Charles Trevelyan and his organisation propose to bring into order. The Church, which is the most powerful of them all, appears, from Sir Charles Trevelyan's quotations, to display a praiseworthy readiness to set a good example. If the mass of Church people will follow the advice of their leader, it is not by them that the difficulty will be occasioned. But it is evident that in this, as in other kindred matters, two or three agencies determined on independence are sufficient to disorganise the whole. If Sir Charles and his friends succeed, their aid may be profitably invited in reference to a few other subjects. Meanwhile, there is one safe principle on which we can all work. There is something better than organising large charitable societies, and that is to limit their action as much as possible. A large society is apt to become a large carcass, and to be a mere bait to our social vultures. The more charity can be made personal the less danger will there be of its becoming excessive, and the more chance will there be of its being distributed with due enquiry and precautions. Many people send their money to societies simply to save themselves the inconvenience of doing what they themselves can alone do well. They will not take the trouble to look after their own workmen or their own neighbours, but they send a few guineas to a society. By passing through official hands the gift loses the redeeming influence of personal kindness, and the recipient regards it, not as charity, but as a largess to which he has a right. Some of the most experienced and most sorely burdened clergy at the East-end have begun to ask to be left alone, as a less evil than being recklessly assisted

by the West. Rates-in-aid and subscriptions-in-aid are both good things in their time and place, but the more they are restricted, and the more destitution of all kinds is dealt with by those who have immediate and local experience of it, the more wholesome is the relief. This is the real excuse for the societies. They are in great part made necessary by the neglect of the very persons who complain of them. If, instead of grumbling, or instead of rushing off into a district three miles distant in the romantic pursuit of heart-rending destitution, such people would interest themselves in the poor with whom they come in contact, or would work patiently on relief committees in their own parishes, the chief difficulties of this question would be solved. In the long run, nothing but steady personal labour in the discharge of personal responsibility will distribute charity in fruitful channels, or heal the divisions of modern society.

HOW TO RELIEVE THE POOR OF EDINBURGH AND OTHER GREAT CITIES, WITHOUT IN- CREASING PAUPERISM. A TRIED, SUCCESS- FUL, AND ECONOMICAL PLAN, 1867.¹

Object of
the society.

THE present plan leaves all existing institutions, charities, parish systems, &c., in full vigour ; it does not interfere with clergy, ministers, city-missionaries, or Bible women ; it is simply A UNION OF THE WHOLE CITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING AND RELIEVING THE TEMPORAL WANTS OF THE POOR.

Must be a
lay society.

But it is work which must be done by laymen. Ministers have already their hands full ; and, for the sake of the Work to which they are set apart, as well as for the sake of the poor, a society for the specific purpose of enquiring into and relieving distress should be organised, distinct from all Churches and their work. It is properly the work of the laity. The clergyman in old times was often the surgeon, but both the bodies and souls of men have gained by the separation between the two offices. The clergyman, like any other man, may still bind up a wound, but it is no longer his peculiar work ; and just as he calls in the skilful surgeon, so he will now be able to call in the experienced visitor, just as he sends a sick man to the hospital, so he can have recourse to the relief society. This is not only a good and proper thing in itself, but it is essential to the universal adoption of the plan. In a country like ours, where there are so many different religious bodies, one will not yield a foot to any other. They cannot work together as Established and Voluntary Churches, as Presbyterians

¹ This Pamphlet, and the Report of which an extract will be found at p. 51, ought to be read *in extenso* by all who are interested in the subject. They were both published by Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh.

and Episcopalians, and therefore they must not come into the field under their separate banners and their respective leaders. They must come together on the common ground of humanity; they must enlist as they would in the ranks of the army, irrespective of creed or religious opinion; they must unite as surgeons do on the field of battle, to relieve suffering, and to help their fellow-creatures.

The plan is based on three great principles :—

Principles.

1. THOROUGH SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION OF THE ACTUAL CONDITION AND WANTS OF ALL THE POOR IN A CITY.

2. SUITABLE RELIEF GIVEN IN EVERY CASE OF NEED, IN WAYS WHICH TEND LEAST TO ABUSE, OR TO DEGRADE AND PAUPERIZE THE RECEIVER.

3. RELIEF GIVEN AS FAR AS POSSIBLE BY METHODS WHICH ENABLE THE POOR TO HELP THEMSELVES, THE GREAT OBJECT BEING TO PREVENT CASES OF TEMPORARY DESTITUTION FROM BECOMING CASES OF PERMANENT PAUPERISM.

These essential principles are carried out by the most systematic and economical methods. Combination and organisation are used to give power and efficacy to the spontaneous efforts of charitable people, not to supplant them.

An association is formed by men of all parties, with a general committee to superintend its affairs and operations. The whole city is portioned out into Divisions, each of which is placed under the charge of a small active committee, composed usually of the leading philanthropists (one or more from each denomination) connected with the district, which arranges all the details of work in their respective divisions, and, in conjunction with the general committee, is answerable to the public for the proper management of the society, and its funds.

Plan of
society.

The divisions are again subdivided into small districts, each of which is placed under charge of a visitor, either a layman or a lady who has volunteered for the work. Every part of the town is thus included in some district, the size of which, of course, depends on the number of families within it likely to require visitation, but all are made so small that the charge of each is rendered light and manageable.

Others have asked if there is not too much centralization? We reply: The plan is an application of what is known as Dr. Chalmers's 'territorial system.' The committee and Visitors of each district belong, as much as possible, to that district. Instead of visiting *per saltum* (*Scotticè*, sprang-wise) all over the city, as our charitable societies for the blind or destitute sick are obliged to do, each Visitor has a small and manageable locality, in which he learns to know every household and its score of neighbours. He goes to them all, blind, or old, or sick, or strong, honest or disreputable, just as they come; and then he has a consulting committee of experienced and benevolent men, such as heads of existing charities, besides his co-visitors, to take counsel with, whose interest, experience, and judgment are thus brought to bear upon each case of importance. Nothing can be more local and individual than the distribution of charity.

Visitors.

The business of a Visitor is to become thoroughly acquainted with the people he has undertaken to visit, with their circumstances and wants, and to minister advice and aid according to definite rules (adapted by the committees as far as possible to all cases, so as to relieve him of care and responsibility). He can always, if he chooses, consult the Visitors of adjoining districts, until the meeting of the local committee, who will then give such directions as the combined judgment of all suggests. He has to submit regular reports of what he has done, and what he proposes, to his committee, whose meetings he is expected to attend.

The society has a central but inexpensive office, and employs an efficient hard-working secretary¹ to transact its daily business, who is the only person (besides office-assistants, messengers, &c.) who is paid.

The services of the society are at the disposal, not only of subscribers, but of the public in general. So soon as any one is applied to for relief, he sends the applicant, if evidently

¹ Such a secretary should be well paid, and be in a position equal to an Inspector of the Poor.

able to go in person, to the secretary, but otherwise he fills up a small printed form with his name and address, and forwards it, without signature and without any recommendation whatever, to the secretary's office, where an alphabetical register is kept of every case enquired into by the society, containing all that has been ascertained respecting each. Unless the secretary is obliged to reject the application on the spot, as that of one totally undeserving, he despatches printed forms, requesting information, to the lady or gentleman Visitor of the district in which the distressed person lives, and also to all city-missionaries, Bible-women, or other agents of any denomination employed in the same locality. These agents are not in any way either remunerated or directed by the society, but the religious bodies employing them readily consent to their investigating cases of distress within their respective districts, because their own special work, instead of being thereby hindered, is furthered by increased familiarity with the character and condition of the poor. The Visitor is expected to go or send at once, and is empowered to supply all that is absolutely necessary for the day.

When the secretary receives the answers of all to whom he has applied for information, he is able to send relief to the case in question, according to certain fixed rules (relating to the number and state of the family, &c.), which leave little or nothing to his discretion, until the meeting of the district committee, before whom the whole matter is laid.¹ Among the fundamental rules are—1. To give what is least susceptible of abuse, and consequently no money. 2. To give necessary articles, but only in small quantities, and in proportion to immediate need; and of coarser quality than might be procured by labour, except in cases of sickness. 3. To give assistance at the right moment; not to prolong it beyond the necessity that calls for it; but to extend, restrict,

¹ The articles can either be sent from a depot, formed by gifts or purchases, or the poor may be authorized by ticket to obtain goods from respectable tradesmen with whom the society has made an arrangement to supply them at wholesale price.

and modify relief according to that necessity. In the meantime, the Visitor continues visiting and counselling the distressed person, and becoming thoroughly acquainted with his difficulties and wants. A little wise advice, a little encouragement, a few seasonable hints, are often what are chiefly required. The secretary and Visitors submit all their reports to the committee, and the united experience, ingenuity, and influence of all are thus brought to bear on every case.

The immense advantages of this system of communication between all who are working among the poor cannot be over-estimated.

Prevents
imposture.

A single visitor may be imposed upon, but it is scarcely within the bounds of possibility that imposture should escape discovery, when the knowledge gathered up during a long course of years by the different religious bodies, and that acquired by the recent investigations of their experienced agents, visiting independently of each other, is concentrated into one focus, so as to throw light on each case. By this means charitable relief is not wasted either on imposture, or by extravagance or misapplication, but, on the contrary, is preserved for those really in need, and is also applied in the most business-like manner, so that a shilling is often made to go twice as far as at present.

Prevents
waste.

All visited.

Another main advantage of this system is the thorough manner in which the poor are visited. Owing to the regular way in which the whole city is divided, and the small size of the districts, each is so easily and so thoroughly visited, that not a single poor family can be overlooked, and no case of real distress can fail to become known and relieved.

Relieves
clergymen
and others.

The collateral advantages are innumerable. For instance, this system relieves clergymen and other spiritual instructors from a burden too heavy for them to bear. It saves them from being compelled to spend their time and strength unduly, as is now the case, in investigating and attending to temporal want alone. The clergymen, like other charitable people, will be able to make over the work of examining and inquiring into character and circumstances to a body of experienced agents. The city missionary will be left free for his proper

work. He will be able to refer the poor for temporal relief to the Visitor, while the latter will thankfully avail himself of the experience and information of the Scripture-reader, missionary, or Bible-woman. The district-visitor will be more sure of the motives of those who attend her mothers'-meetings and Bible-classes. Mrs. Ranyard, the well-known founder of the Bible-woman's Mission, is most earnest in repeatedly urging attention to this point. She says, 'We never think it right to dispense relief by the hand of a Bible-woman if we can help it. It is not that we do not trust her, but it *hinders her true usefulness.*'¹

Dr. Chalmers, who is perhaps one of the greatest of writers on the relief of the poor, strongly advocated the necessity of in general keeping spiritual work distinct from almsgiving. He once said, 'You ladies go about among the poor with a tract in one hand and a shilling in the other. How *can* their eye be single? It just keeps veering from the tract to the shilling.' He based his views on the example of the apostles, who, although they exhorted Christians to give largely, and even undertook to convey their gifts, yet refused to 'leave the Word of God to serve tables.' Dr. Chalmers says, 'It has never been enough adverted to that a process for Christianizing the people is sure to be tainted and enfeebled when there is allied with it a process for alimentering the people; there lies a moral impossibility in the way of accomplishing these two objects by the working of one and the same machinery.' At the same time, it must be remembered that no restriction is or can be laid upon the Visitor. His business is to relieve distress, as a surgeon's is to relieve pain; but if either the Visitor or the surgeon be a Christian, he cannot be precluded from endeavouring to lead all with whom he comes in contact to the knowledge of Him who is the Life. And it is worthy of note that some of those most conspicuous for thorough and efficient parochial work have hailed this system with the greatest eagerness. The very men who do most, know best how much remains to be done, and the need for a better method of doing it.

Dr. Chalmers's
views.

¹ *Life Work*, p. 80.

Poor-
Laws.

This plan no more interferes with the proper action of the Poor-Laws than does private charity. All who are strictly paupers or proper objects for parochial relief are referred to the Poor-Law guardians.

But there are numerous cases which no Poor-Law can meet. For instance, a skilled workman is attacked by severe and tedious illness. After many months he recovers sufficiently to look out for lighter employment. His savings are expended, his clothes worn out, yet he is not a fit object for parochial relief, nor for any existing charity. He is well, but out of work. Is he to starve?

Able-bodied men out of work have been found living for a whole week on dry bread, and tea without milk or sugar. Does such diet fit them for work? And do not such men require a helping hand?

The great object of the society is *to prevent the poor from becoming paupers*; in other words, so to tide them over temporary difficulties, that they may be able to pursue their voyage through life, instead of being left wrecked and stranded half way. It is for the advantage of the public that the poor should be assisted to maintain themselves, rather than be forced to go into a poorhouse, where they can do nothing towards their own maintenance.

All who are fit objects for any existing charitable institution, hospitals, Destitute Sick Society, reformatories, &c., will be presented to these charities until the latter can do no more. But the timely interposition of the relief society will save many from sinking into such a condition as to require the aid of these institutions. Thus the demands on each will be materially lessened.

Private
charity.

Some have enquired how this system will affect private charity? It leaves it to do all that it can; it only offers co-operation when that is insufficient.

Most of us have some poor friends,—some whose respectability and honesty we have known for years. There is no question about these. We can and ought to aid such in private as we should aid a friend in a higher rank of life. But how often are our means insufficient, and our help

miserably short of what is needed ! When this is the case, we may, under such a system, refer a poor friend confidentially for further aid to the society ; for the committee can so arrange, that there will be nothing to degrade or wound the feelings in the mode of rendering assistance.

And in the far more numerous instances where we are applied to by comparative strangers, we shall be able to insure relief for them without the risk of fostering imposition.¹

All the ingenuity and efforts of private charity, in clothing-societies, working-parties, or in sending little delicacies to the sick, &c., will be made doubly efficacious, by the security thus afforded that the objects of it are deserving. All that is required is communication and co-operation. *No good work will be interfered with.* It will only be helped. And there are few of us so self-satisfied as not to acknowledge the immense advantages of such opportunities of comparing notes and gaining information as are afforded to each Visitor at the meetings of the local committee.

It has been sarcastically said, ‘ In London rival philanthropists ride their respective hobbies, and decline to run them tandem-wise, or in any way in association with another hobby.’² Now we ask still less. Those who prefer to ride a hobby alone are only requested *not to run against each other.* For some purposes a humble donkey-cart is more suited than a splendid team of four-in-hand ; but it cannot be necessary to have two donkey-carts for the same old woman, while another still more infirm has to trudge afoot.

This system is an effectual method of suppressing begging. To give to beggars is to foster idleness and imposture. Many have been driven to begging by extreme distress, and have found it so much more profitable than labour, that they have stuck to it as the trade that paid them best. As Arch-

Effect on
mendicity.

¹ Of course others can visit the poor besides those connected with the society : occasional visitors can render great service to the common cause, if they will only communicate their information to the society ; and still more so if they will avail themselves of its services for the thorough examination of the cases they are interested in.

² *Children of Lutetia.*

bishop Whately justly said, ‘What you pay a man to do, he will do; if you pay a man to work he will work, and *if you pay a man to beg he will beg.*’ Well-authenticated instances are known of vagrants here in Edinburgh, confessing that they could make at the rate of more than forty shillings a week by begging, which is upwards of 100*l.* a year! At present, many soft-hearted people give to street-beggars, for fear of refusing assistance to one who is starving. If they were certain that on sending the name and address to the Visitor of the district, real want would be at once relieved, they would cease to give in the streets, and would feel that by making over beggars to the society, they were placing the case in hands which would deal with it far more skilfully than any private individual could do; and would no more attempt to meet it by the casual gift of a few pence or a few shillings, than they would tie up a broken arm with a ‘bit of blue ribbon’ in preference to sending the patient to the Infirmary. It will be a great relief to know that we need no longer run the risk of encouraging vice in order to avoid the danger of turning a deaf ear to real distress.

The moral influence of this system is very great.

Promotes
habits
of tem-
perance.

It has greatly promoted temperate habits. When it is necessary to relieve the families of drunkards, it is done, as far as possible, by sending them where they will get a good meal, while, as for the drunkard himself, the choice lies between abstinence during the time he receives help, or *quasi*-starvation. It is found in practice that the former is chosen. This rule is based on the principle that charitable people do not give their money with the intention of ministering to vicious indulgence. The intemperate are not required, but are recommended to take the pledge, as by associating with those who have done so, they meet with encouragements to sobriety. The result of thus breaking the habit of drinking, even for a short time, is that about half continue to be temperance members when their distress is over. It is not fair to overlook the fact, that while drink is a frequent cause of poverty, poverty is a frequent incentive to drink. A person living on tea and dry bread for days, unable to buy more

Poverty
causes

satisfying food, flies to stimulants as the cheapest way of stilling the cravings of want. intemperance.

Another great advantage resulting from the action of such a society is, that the education of all the young under its influence is secured, as it requires that all children of a proper age shall attend school, clothing being supplied, and school-fees paid when necessary. A valuable off-shoot from the relief society is one for orphans, and for those children whose vicious and criminal parents are too glad to get rid of them. Instead of poor little children being kept in huge orphanages, they are placed under the charge of small committees, formed all over the country, who board them with respectable poor families or widows, where they often find the only real homes they ever knew, while the expense is less than that of large asylums. These local committees watch over their education; apprentice them to farmers or others; and see that they are properly trained and cared for in all respects. They are thus rescued from otherwise inevitable ruin, and prevented from adding to the ranks of the pauper or criminal classes, while the plan itself seems in accordance with that Infinite wisdom which ‘setteth the solitary *in families*.’ Education and rescue of children.

One of the most valuable results of this system is the friendly intercourse it establishes between different classes. The isolated young workwoman from the country is brought into contact with a person of better education, wider experience, and greater knowledge of the world than herself. She has thus some one to turn to for advice and help in time of sickness, privation, or temptation. The industrious mechanic gains a friend with whom he can take counsel regarding a change of residence, or the principles of a benefit-club, or a building-society, the propriety of emigration, or a thousand other subjects where the advice of a man of greater knowledge than his own is invaluable; while the Visitor, whose interests, sympathies, time, and thoughts are thus drawn away from himself, and directed to his fellows of a lower rank and less fortunate position, cannot fail to experience how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. Friendly intercourse between rich and poor.

Masters
and work-
men.

This plan has done much to bridge over the gulf between the working man and his employer, and indeed between all classes. The Visitors are not only ladies and women of all ranks, but often men of position, many of them men of business, lawyers, merchants, and others. They get to understand the feelings, wants, and difficulties of their poorer neighbours to a degree heretofore unknown. In cases of wide-spread distress, from workmen being thrown out of employment, the society has intervened most beneficially as a mediator between employers and workmen.

These kindly proceedings produce friendly feeling between the two classes. It is not in human nature to 'grind the poor' whom you have just been assisting, still less is it in human nature not to feel gratitude for seasonable relief.

Supplies
workmen.

The system of concentrating and recording the knowledge obtained from all quarters is of the greatest benefit, by enabling the poor to find work, and masters to find workmen. A separate register is kept, under different headings, of all persons in want of work. So that any one requiring a journeyman, a respectable seamstress, an errand-boy, servant, or labourer of any kind, can at once have a list of such presented for inspection, with a general reference to character. Such a register often enables a tradesman to complete an important order, by supplying him with the means of getting extra hands at an hour's notice.

Advantage
of loans.

Properly arranged loans to trustworthy people, in times of difficulty, are fruitful of the best results. The means of the benevolent are economized, and the poor are encouraged to maintain their independence.

As Dr. Norman Macleod, in his eloquent exposition of the plan now under consideration, justly says,¹ 'One of the most cheering, yet humbling facts, in connexion with the relief of the deserving poor, is the little money that will tide a family over a trying time, when it is prudently used, with encouraging words, and other small but effective remedial measures, which can hardly be specified, but which expe-

¹ *Good Words*, August 1866, p. 556.

rience, good feeling, and common sense naturally dictate. In the path of the deserving poor there ever and anon occur ditches, which they have not the means of crossing *at the moment*, and which, therefore, make escape from the bull that is pursuing them as impossible as if they were oceans. A single plank would make escape easy—but the plank is not there! They may be able to command a dozen in a month perhaps, but they need one *now*; and if they have not the plank, and the bull is in full chase!—what then? The result too often is, that they are driven by the pressure of sore temptation to take their first downward step from the path of virtue or of honesty, and are not only ruined, body and soul, but become a burden and curse upon society. Few persons are at all aware how much the poor stand in need of information. They neither know that help is to be had, nor how to apply for it, and they often endure life-long suffering for want of some simple surgical appliance, even such as a bandage. They still more often, either from ignorance or from fear of expense, neglect their health until it is past recovery, or else injure it by having recourse to quacks and their pernicious nostrums. Many might be saved from death or from lingering disease and dependence upon the public, by the aid of a Visitor who would procure for them, at the right moment, skilled medical aid, the services of a nurse, and sometimes only a little tempting or nourishing food.

Need of information among the poor.

Some of them do not know that the blind or the dumb are capable of being taught. An insane girl was recently found shut up in a small dark closet, her friends having no idea that anything else could be done with her.

No one not conversant with the difficulties of the poor, and the manner in which their whole time and faculties are absorbed in the effort to maintain life, can appreciate the benefit often conveyed to them by a few words of advice relative to a more profitable application of their labour, or where to find work.

The effect of this organized system of visitation, wherever it has been set on foot, whether in Europe or America, has been to bring to light many existing unrelieved wants, and

Society fertile in its effects.

as many ways of remedying them. Dr. Macleod says, ‘ It was not possible for an association like this to come into such close contact with the masses—to gather up through its many agents so much accurate information every month, and to systematize this, year after year—without its suggesting and developing various benevolent schemes and social reforms bearing on the moral and physical well-being of the poor. And one of the benefits conferred by such a society is its influence in creating a right public opinion, which must precede any legislation required to effect sanitary reforms on a large scale. Each succeeding year almost, in the history of the association, has been thus marked by a practical enquiry into some existing evil or remedy for it. It has, for example, organized a system for the supply of the *indigent sick* with gratuitous medical aid ; and this has ended in the establishment of admirable dispensaries in the several wards of the city—the Demiet Dispensary alone having last year aided 328,308 persons, 66,128 being at their own homes. It has fostered special societies, as, for example, one “ for the relief of the ruptured and crippled.”¹ It introduced and systematized measures for lending stoves, tools, &c., and for gathering and distributing second-hand clothing and broken victuals. It published and circulated popular *tracts* on moral and economical subjects, imparting useful information and counsel. It took means of gathering neglected and vagrant children into *Sabbath, week-day evening, and industrial* schools ; furnishing statistics which proved that, in the city, 40,000 children were growing up in ignorance, profligacy, and crime ! As a result of this investigation, it projected and established a *Juvenile Asylum* for the education and elevation of vicious children, and their subsequent indenture. It founded a *Public Washing and Bathing Establishment*, at an expense of upwards of 8,000*l.*, of whose benefits, for cheap washing and ironing, 75,000 persons annually avail themselves, so that it is now self-supporting. It has done much for the young, by obtaining an Act for the care

¹ ‘ This society relieved, in 1864, 819 cases.’

of *truant children*; and by establishing a *Children's Aid Society*. It has been instrumental in raising a *Working Man's Home*; and has consequently kept before the public and the legislature of the State the demands of the city for sanitary reform in the drainage and in the overcrowded, ill-ventilated houses.'

There is nothing in this society more worthy of note than the principles on which it acts towards the undeserving, and the influence it exercises over them. These principles are such as peculiarly commend themselves to our Scottish love of independence, and strong sense of the demerits of wilful idleness.

The unde-
serving.

The Scripture precept, 'If any will not work, neither shall he eat' (2 Thess. iii. 10), is carried out into practice. Those who persist in wilful idleness and vice ought not to be relieved by any one until they amend. To do otherwise is not only foolish, but wrong; it is not only 'putting money into a bag with holes,' but it is a real injury both to the public, by perpetuating the evils of vagrancy and vicious pauperism, and to the delinquents themselves, by encouraging them in their downward path. But while we rightly leave those who persist in vicious courses to suffer the misery which Divine wisdom has made the natural consequence thereof, yet it is equally our duty not to give up even the worst of our fellow-sinners, as if there were no hope for them. The prodigal was left to feed upon the husks which the swine did eat; but no sooner did he begin to return than his father met him *a great way off*;—and we must endeavour to follow our Great Exemplar. It is therefore an essential part of the duty of the Visitors to do their utmost to reclaim even the most debased. They are visited, exhorted, and encouraged to amend; the way pointed out, and every inducement offered to follow it.

We have shown that the co-operation and communication established by the society among those who relieve the poor effectually prevents the vicious poor from obtaining by deceit and imposition from one, what has been justly refused to them by another. It would therefore be difficult to ex-

Wrong to
frustrate
these
effects.

aggrate the harm done by continuing the present mode of giving in the dark, without communication with each other regarding the cases relieved. By so doing, we frustrate one another's efforts without attaining our ends; waste time and means, and encourage every species of wickedness among the poor.

Reforma-
tory work.

The society, on the contrary, is a most powerful agent of moral reformation. It makes use of the strongest natural motives to 'cease to do evil, and learn to do well.' On the one hand, persistent evil-doers are left to unmitigated want; on the other, the very first step towards amendment is met and sustained by immediate assistance. We must remember that (humanly speaking) much of crime, as well as poverty, is the result of circumstances. If we can improve those circumstances, the results will naturally diminish. Perhaps Christians have, in seeking the salvation of souls, given too little heed to this very important consideration. There is no denying that some circumstances are more favourable to the reception of the truth than others. While only the free grace of God can draw any one to Himself, yet it is equally true that we can either place stumbling-blocks or remove them; and it is undeniable that a child surrounded by all the watchful care and tender influences of a Christian home, is far more likely to receive the Gospel, than one brought up, either as a cannibal in Africa, or a thief in the wynds of Edinburgh. Let us, therefore, endeavour to make some of 'the crooked paths straight,' and some of 'the rough places plain,' that a highway may be prepared for the Gospel.

Reformatories, refuges, the Irish prison system, all act on this principle. You must clear the ground in order to lay the foundation; and though clearing the ground is of little use, if we leave off there, it is still a most important preliminary to building a city.

Recom-
mends the
Gospel to
the poor.

There is also another consideration which we ought all to take to heart, and that is, the importance of recommending the Gospel to those who care nothing for it, by combined and sustained efforts for their temporal good. Our blessed Lord

healed all who came to Him. The success of Medical Missions has proved the wisdom of following in His footsteps; and the relief given by the British during the Indian famine of 1860, in spite of the horrors of the Mutiny of the preceding years, did more to impress the natives with the reality of Christianity than anything else has ever done. There are thousands in our great cities who hate the Gospel, thousands more who are totally ignorant of it. All these cry to the Church Universal, 'Show me thy faith by thy works!' Let Christians answer by joining hand to hand in the effort to rescue and save. There is no limit to the good that might thus be done in removing prejudice, softening hatred, and preparing ears to hear and hearts to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. We therefore trust that, in the words of the eminent writer we have quoted, 'the time is come when, urged by a sense of duty, by the cry of the deserving poor, by the increase of unprincipled pauperism, and by the obvious and acknowledged evils which the best worked poor-law produces, but can neither prevent nor cure, the Christian community of this land will come to the rescue, and unite in works of true charity for the good of their suffering neighbours.'

The following conclusions will be granted by most men:—

1. The state of the poor among us loudly calls for a remedy.
2. A remedy has been tried with great success in other places.
3. It is therefore worth trying among ourselves.

'Shall we forbear to deliver them that are drawn for death?' 'Can we say, Behold, we knew it not?' (Prov. xxiv. 11.) We *do* know their state. We also know that it is not only inhuman, but impolitic to leave them to perish.

Work among the poor has hitherto been too much left to the clergy (who are overburdened), and to women, who, however admirably they do their part, are not capable of doing the whole of the work. We would not that they should do less, but that men should do more. We want educated

intelligent men to give some of their time and attention to this great question. What is needed, on our part, is energetic, united, and immediate action. We have too long sat still lamenting; let us up and be doing. Let us leave all prejudices and petty jealousies aside, and unite in 'a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together.'

REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE POORER
CLASSES OF EDINBURGH, AND OF THEIR
DWELLINGS, NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND FAM-
ILIES, 1868.

II. *Remedies which can only be applied by those who are superior
to the sufferers in the social scale.*

Your Committee have traced much of the domestic misery which exists in the abodes of the poor to the destruction among them of the hallowed relationship of the family, the natural corrective which divine wisdom has provided for the selfish tendencies of human nature. Just as the due regulation of the household suffers from the neglect of family ties, so the due regulation of the community suffers when men forget their duty to their fellow-men. If reckless expenditure on selfish gratification be the cause of much misery among the poor, it is by no means confined to that class, while they are also made to suffer by the avaricious hoarding or luxurious wasting of those who might otherwise have reached out to them a helping hand. Was it not because he saw the prevalence of a tendency to neglect their duty to those beneath them in the social scale, that the aged Paul, instructing his youthful follower, enjoined him to ‘charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.’—(1 Tim. vi. 17—19).

1. *Systematic house-to-house visitation.*—It is too often

overlooked that money is, by no means, the only talent for which the upper classes in society have to give an account. Part of their time must also be dedicated to the poor, and ought not all to be absorbed in avaricious acquisition, or the search after selfish gratification. It is not by merely sending money, it is not by merely opening refuges and means of elevation, that the lapsed classes will be restored. 'We know,' says Dr. Chalmers, 'of no expedient by which this woful degeneracy can be arrested and recalled, but an actual search and entry upon the territory of wickedness. A mere signal of invitation is not enough. In reference to the great majority, and in reference to the more needful, this was as powerless as the bidding to the marriage feast of the parable. We must have recourse at last to the final experiment that was adopted on that occasion, or, in other words, go out to the streets and the highways, and by every fair measure of moral and personal and friendly application, compel the multitudes to come in.'—(*Christian Polity of a Nation.—Collins' Edition of Works*, xiv. 84.) The principles he proclaimed with trumpet tones of solemn warning, and urged with affectionate earnestness, he also put in practice; and the result of his operations demonstrated, that, if a well-organised voluntary agency can be brought to bear on a vicious and neglected population, it can achieve, at a minimum expenditure of time, labour, and money, a maximum of good, which no salaried agents or legal provision for pauperism could ever accomplish.

Although the general correctness of his views has been fully recognised by many in this country, yet the people of other lands are far in advance of us in giving them a practical application. From France and Germany, and from beyond the Atlantic, we hear of the great good which results from the operation of principles identical with many of those he enunciated, in so far as the bringing to bear an 'aggressive' agency, and a systematic and well-organised house-to-house visitation of the poor is concerned. Reasons, however, exist in these countries, and are far from being inoperative in Edinburgh, which led those by whom these agencies were

established, not to intermeddle with religious teaching, but to limit their operation strictly to the relief of the temporal wants of the poor.

Three advantages are gained by this limitation—

1st. Every man, whatever his religious opinions may be, is free to unite with others in prosecuting this great work of charity, which can only be successful when promoted by that systematic and thorough co-operation by which such great results have been achieved in other departments of human labour.

2d. It sets free ministers of religion, missionaries, and Bible-women, whose peculiar duty it is to attend to the spiritual wants of the poor, from stimulating that tendency to hypocrisy and dissimulation which is sure to follow the footsteps even of the most discerning minister of religion, when he seeks to act also as the distributor of his own or others' charity.

3d. In so far as the efforts of lay agencies are successful in alleviating the temporal condition of the poor, they remove many obstacles to the reception of the Gospel, and open the way for the ministers of religion to exercise their

¹ To strengthen the opinion of the impolicy and danger to the poor of the same agents being employed to minister both in temporal and in spiritual things, your Committee request special attention to the three following extracts:—

Dr. Chalmers said—'Your ladies go about among the poor with a tract in one hand and a shilling in the other. How *can* their eye be single? It just keeps veering from the tract to the shilling.' And again—

'It has never been enough adverted to, that a process for Christianising the people is sure to be tainted and enfeebled when there is allied with it a process for alimentering the people; there lies a moral impossibility in the way of accomplishing these two objects, by the working of one and the same machinery.'

Dr. Guthrie, in his address delivered in London in December 1867, thus endorses the same sentiment:—'Experience has taught me, and many besides, that when the minister of religion is known as an almoner of charity, it leads to an extraordinary amount of pretence and hypocrisy, to something no better than prison religion; and of all religions that which prisons foster is the worst.'

Mrs. Ranyard, the founder of the Bible-women's Mission, says:—'We never think it right to dispense relief by the hand of a Bible-woman, if we can help it. It is not that we do not trust her, but it hinders her true usefulness.'

It may be further noted, that the 'Scripture Readers' Society,' and other societies in England, have been forced, by experience, rigorously to adhere to this principle.

more peculiar functions ; for, to whatever extent the sense of neglect and the pressure of severe want is removed, to that extent will the ground be the better prepared for the reception of the precious seed which it is the privilege of the Clergy to sow.

Your Committee may thus describe the origin of the plan which is in operation in America :—

About a quarter of a century ago, a number of philanthropic citizens of New York, being impressed with the failure of the efforts of all existing societies to grapple with the increasing pauperism which prevailed there, appointed a committee of their number to enquire into the causes of the acknowledged want of success of the existing charities, and also to devise, if possible, a better scheme of dispensing relief. This committee traced the evils of the then existing system to four great heads :—

First, The want of discrimination in giving charity.

Second, The want of concerted action among the various charitable societies.

Third, The want of sufficient personal intercourse, sympathy, and counsel, between the giver and receiver of charity.

Fourth, The want of any ability in the State Poor Law to remove the causes of poverty, and its tendency, therefore, to increase the amount.

The remedy this committee suggested, and which was carried out, and has been in operation since 1844, was the formation of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. It may be described in a single sentence as a union of the whole city, without reference to sect or party, for the purposes of thoroughly and systematically investigating and relieving the temporal wants of the poor. It in no way interferes with any agencies for imparting spiritual instruction, or with any societies already established for rendering temporal aid to the needy ; but rather by promoting co-operation among them, and by affording them a ready means of communication in regard to their work, it enables them to avoid ‘overlapping and thwarting each other’s efforts, so that by its assistance their means have

been economised, and their operations facilitated.'¹ Your Committee are satisfied that no one who is ignorant of the facts and arguments contained in the pamphlets referred to in the foot-note, is qualified to pronounce a judgment on the recommendations of this Report. The scheme is not a utopian one; it has been worked in New York for upwards of twenty years, with a success that may well encourage a trial of it in other places.

It must be borne in mind, also, that in New York the hindrances to the successful operation of the scheme far surpass any which it could encounter in Edinburgh. The city government there is acknowledged to be corrupt and inefficient; the sanitary condition peculiarly unfavourable; while nearly a quarter of a million of emigrants arrive there annually, many of whom are taken from the most depraved and criminal class of our European cities.

Your Committee understand that plans, more or less similar, are beneficially carried out in different cities of the United States. But, as the condition of things in those places is far more favourable than in New York, or probably than in Edinburgh, your Committee will briefly refer to the experience of European cities. In Paris, where systematic measures of visitation and relief of the poor have been employed for many years, the proportion of pauperism, according to the last returns, is stated to be now only one pauper to every 17·12 inhabitants; while the economy of the system employed is such, that it has been carefully estimated, that were it practised here, there would be an immediate money saving almost equal to the entire amount of our voluntary charitable contributions.² It must not be supposed that

¹ For a full account of the results, principles, and methods pursued by this interesting Association, we refer our readers to a paper by Dr. Norman Macleod, in the number of *Good Words* for August, 1866, also to a pamphlet just published by Dr. Norman Macleod, entitled 'How can we best Relieve our deserving Poor?'—Alexander Strahan, 1867—in which he eloquently advocates the application of the scheme to our own neglected cities; and also to the admirable pamphlet referred to in our prefatory note, entitled 'How to Relieve the Poor of Edinburgh and other great cities, without Increasing Pauperism. a tried, economical, and successful plan'—Edmonston & Douglas, 1866.

² *The Poor of Paris*.—A recent return of the indigent class in Paris gives us the following particulars:—In the population of Paris in 1866, there were 40,644

this great saving of funds is effected through any neglect of the needy. Travellers and competent authorities all concur in the testimony that, during recent years, there is scarcely a semblance of poverty to be observed in that great city, compared with the fearful destitution and misery so apparent in Edinburgh, where the recipients of relief are twice as numerous as in the French capital. This result in Paris is mainly to be ascribed to the voluntary, but thoroughly organised efforts of several hundreds of benevolent persons of both sexes, and of various ranks, some connected with the Court, others engaged in professions and trades, none of whom necessarily belong to any religious order. These visitors have each a small district in the poorer quarters of the city under their charge, where they search out, encourage, and properly aid the industrious deserving poor, and thus preserve them from falling into the ranks of the lapsed classes.¹

Not only in France, but in different German cities, most encouraging results, during recent years, have been realised, from the adoption of systematic charitable measures. In the Prussian city of Elberfeld, which now contains upwards of 61,000 inhabitants, pauperism had, during several years, gradually increased, until at last it had reached such an alarming extent, that every ninth or tenth person was in receipt of relief,—a proportion as great as that to which it has attained in Edinburgh. The citizens, moved by the misery around them, and burdened by the augmenting taxation and demands for charitable aid, resolved, with the co-operation of the authorities, to adopt measures for the systematic and regular visitation and relief of the poor. The result has been that within a few years, according to official estimates, the entire poverty of the city has been reduced more than

families, comprising 105,119 individuals, or one person out of every 17·12 was a registered and relieved pauper. The richest quarter is the 'fashionable 9th arrondissement' (l'Élysée), in which there is only one pauper out of 53·65 inhabitants; the poorest is the 'Gobelins,' where one out of 6·21 get relief. It appears that three-fourths of the persons seeking relief in Paris do not really belong to the city, but are country people, tempted to Paris by what seems to them—persons totally ignorant of the increased rate of living here—fabulous wages.

¹ Children of Lutetia, by Blanchard Jerrold.

two-thirds, notwithstanding that the population, during the same period, has increased at the rate of more than 1000 a year.

An official published report, procured for your Committee, and courteously furnished by the Ober-Bürgermeister (chief magistrate) of Elberfeld, and which was prepared by the President of the Poor Law Board of that city, states that ‘the population in 1855 amounted to 50,612 persons. Relief was extended to 4,224 in their own homes, and to 600 in charitable institutions; the whole number relieved was therefore 4,824; consequently, of every hundred of the population, nine and one-half received relief. In December 1864 the population amounted to 61,000; relief was given to 1,250 poor in their own homes, and to 550 in charitable institutions;—whole amount 1,800 persons: consequently, in every hundred of the inhabitants, less than three received public relief.’ The report furnishes conclusive evidence that within the brief period of nine years, the poverty of the city was permanently reduced more than two-thirds. It also contains detailed information regarding the annual expenditure of the poor, which shows that the entire sum spent in out-door relief, and by the various charitable institutions, including the hospitals and orphanages, has, during late years, been less than one-half the amount which was expended before the systematic measures were brought into operation. The circumstances of the city during the years referred to were extremely unfavourable. The Rev. W. Fleming Stevenson, who has given special attention to the operation and results of philanthropic work in Germany, informs us that, while the experiment was being tried, ‘there was a continuance of hard years, when prices were high and work was slack. There was misapprehension, and the difficulty of an unfamiliar project. The accumulating poverty of half a century had to be contended with. When these things are considered, it will be found that the figures are under a true estimate of the gain. Nor has it been impracticable to maintain an efficient staff of visitors. Last year the number of applicants for visitorships far exceeded 252. Instead of requesting

persons to act, the board have always been in a position to select. At first, it was almost at the peril of the visitors' lives that they went among the poor; now, they bring a joy into every household. And the impulse has reacted upon them. They have learned *how* it is more blessed to give than to receive; they have an unselfish doing of good daily asserting itself against the absorbing force of business and careful worldliness; new lights have broken upon many; new sympathies been stirred in them; the harsh repulse of class to class is disappearing; there is mutual knowledge and reliance between the rich and the poor.' It appears that while the number of paupers has been reduced two-thirds, the amount of expenditure has been only diminished by one-half. This is to be explained by the fact that the poor are now so thoroughly and effectively relieved, that little or no room is left for the operation of private charity. Supposing equally effective measures to be employed with a like result in Edinburgh, where, according to careful calculation, upwards of 112,000*l.* are now raised in various ways, and expended annually for the relief of the poor, the annual saving which would be effected cannot be estimated at less than from 50,000*l.* to 60,000*l.*

Reports recently published in America give a most favourable account of the results of the systematic visitation and relief of the poor there. Among these reports there is one from that rapidly increasing city of the far west, Chicago, which has now a population of upwards of 200,000; and although the measures referred to have been in operation there but a comparatively short time, they are already producing satisfactory results.

Your Committee, with such examples before them, and having regard to existing circumstances here, are unable to see any adequate reasons for believing that the adoption of like measures in Edinburgh would not prove equally effective. And if results even approximating to those we have mentioned were realised here, what cause should we have for profound thankfulness! If even one-half of the fearful poverty which now prevails, with all its attendant evils,

could be utterly swept away within a few years, surely it would afford us a rich compensation for whatever personal effort may be required. Considering the remarkable success which has attended the application of these remedial measures in other towns, your Committee beg strongly to recommend that an effort should be made to secure their application to the suffering poor of our own city; and they, therefore, respectfully suggest that a Committee of gentlemen be selected, without reference to sect or party, carefully to consider and mature the details of a scheme of house-to-house visitation, adapted to the local requirements of Edinburgh.

The steadily increasing, and already truly appalling amount of poverty, misery, and wretchedness, which prevails in many parts of Edinburgh, and which all the existing charitable arrangements have hitherto failed to arrest, clearly indicates, in the opinion of your Committee, the necessity for the application of the most systematic and business-like correctives which can be applied, and which the experience of other cities has proved are admirably suited to meet the requirements of such a population.

While your Committee can scarcely anticipate that all will fully recognise the importance or practicability of introducing improved charitable measures, they trust that, considering the admitted inadequacy of existing arrangements, few will be disposed to hinder, in any degree, the efforts of men, of all parties and denominations, who are ready to unite in making a systematic effort to overcome that increasing pauperism and misery which all must sincerely deplore; and your Committee cannot doubt that the many experienced men, who are interested, will be able readily to arrange and bring into operation such practicable measures as will secure results approximating at least to those realised in other places. Your Committee duly appreciate the many difficulties of a local character which must be encountered, especially at the commencement of any really useful comprehensive effort; but they do not deem them so discouraging as many which have been readily overcome in other places, especially as they believe that Edinburgh

possesses as much practical sympathy and administrative ability as other cities, where the scheme is being efficiently carried out.

One of the most valuable features of this plan is, that it brings the rich and poor more together, and thus counteracts that separation of classes, the evil influence of which has been already deprecated. The importance of this is admitted by all who have studied the subject. It was the key-stone of Dr. Chalmer's system ; it seems to be the secret of the marked success which has attended the plan your Committee have shown to be carried out in France, Germany, and America. Mr. F. C. Tufnell, one of the most intelligent Commissioners the English Poor Law Board ever had, thus wrote in 1833 :— 'The personal attention of the rich to the poor seems to be one of the most efficient modes of preventing pauperism. It is a subject of perpetual complaint, that the poor do not receive the charities of the rich with gratitude. The reason of this appears to be that the donation of a few shillings from a rich man to a poor one is no subtraction from the giver's comforts, and, consequently, is no proof of his interest in the other's welfare. It seems natural and reasonable that there should be some proportion preserved between the gratitude felt for a favour conferred, and the difficulty or inconvenience that the doer of it is put to in conferring it. If the rich give their time, instead of their money, to the poor, they part with a commodity which the poor see is valuable to the givers, and, consequently, esteem the attention the more, as it implies an interest in their prosperity ; and a feeling seems to be engendered in their minds of unwillingness to press on the kindness of those who thus prove themselves ready to sympathise with them in distress, and to do their utmost to relieve it. This feeling acts as a spur to the exertions of the poor ; their efforts to depend on their own resources are greater ; and, consequently, the chance of their becoming dependent on the bounty of others less.'

If, as your Committee confidently believe, the enlightened and humane men and women of Edinburgh are found willing to do what the French, Germans, and Americans recognise

to be at once their duty and their privilege, and will steadily, under well-organised agency, work out such a scheme of house-to-house visitation, the poor will be taught that, though vulgarly talked of as ‘hands,’ they are not outcasts, but are recognised as having hearts open to human sympathies, and souls that may be lost or won. It will also teach the visitors the happiness of knowing that helping those of our fellows who require our aid brings with it a rich reward; and that the time redeemed for this purpose from the pursuit of wealth or pleasure will be ‘twice blessed—blessing both him that gives, and him that takes.’

Independently altogether of the direct advantages springing from the establishment of such an agency, many of an indirect character also would, in Edinburgh, as in other places, flow from it; the wants of the poor would become definitely known, which would lead to the adoption of various measures which would enable the poor to help themselves, and would thus not only be beneficial to them, but would also economise the resources of the benevolent. It would also provide a central office, where every one could refer all applicants for aid, and where, after the careful examination of such applicants by the Visitors of the district where they dwell, those found to be worthy objects of benevolence could be directed to any charity that specially met their case, or, if there were none such, might be relieved out of a central fund; and where all cases of doubtful character could be referred for thorough investigation, so as to protect the benevolent from the wiles of the impostor.

For further details regarding the advantages of this scheme we must again refer to the pamphlet, ‘How to Relieve the Poor of Edinburgh,’ &c. What is wanted is to have here, as in other towns, where the plan is in successful operation, a Lay Society, confining its attention to the temporal wants of the poor; distributing its visitors methodically and systematically over the city, in very small, readily visited districts, so that all needy persons may become known, and, as far as possible, aided to help themselves before they sink from neglect into disease and pauperism; a Society managed by men who will

command the confidence of all parties; having its operations conducted in the most economical and business-like manner; setting free the clergy and other spiritual agents to attend to their proper vocation; interfering in no way with private or legal charities, or the societies which dispense them, except to aid, by the knowledge it possesses, when that aid is sought. If such an organisation has been found, in other cities, to have prevented imposture and waste; to have suppressed mendicity; to have promoted habits of temperance, providence, and thrift; to have lessened pauperism and crime; to have induced the poor to avail themselves of educational advantages for their children; if work has been provided for the industrious, and shame made to stimulate the idle; if a friendly intercourse has been re-established between classes of society, too long regarding each other with hatred and distrust, surely, with the admitted failure of all that has been previously done to cope with the gigantic extent of the evil, a sufficient case has been made out for trying the remedy in Edinburgh.





